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The Way of the Cross

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The Way of the Cross.

And other Verses.

BY

B. TEMPLE LAYTON.

HUNTINGDON:
Printed and Published by Alfred Wood, 59 & 60, High Street.

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The Way of the Cross.

In Memoriam.

R. W. L. I.

May 7th, 1897.

OBEDIENT from his childhood, with a child's
Unquestioning simplicity and trust,
With him to hear was always to obey—
He served in England's Navy, and we know
The Sailor's Watchword "Duty," learnt of old
From Nelson's dying lips, is still unchanged ;
And he, my hero, took it for his own
And bravely did his duty, and became
A favorite with Officers and men.
For all who knew him loved him, and all felt
His bright unconscious influence for good,
The simple beauty of his blameless life—
For though he'd grown to early manhood's years,
The vices and temptations of that age
Had had no power to harm him, still he kept
His soul unstained, and spotless as a child's—
And thus with heavenly armour girded on
In all humility he stood prepared

To fight beneath Christ's Banner manfully,
And follow Him wherever He should lead.

'Twas not amid the cannon's mighty roar
Nor clash of steel, nor shout of lusty cheer
That might lend courage to the faintest heart
My hero fought his last most gallant fight.
The voice of his Commander bade him "Come,
Leave all, and follow Me,"—And he obeyed
Forthwith gave up himself, obediently
Fulfilled the word of Him he'd sworn to serve,
And like St. Andrew, went without delay;
Gave up the life he loved, with all its hopes
Of future glory, and a great career,
And was content to suffer with his Lord.

And so he was found worthy of a life
Higher than any earthly fame could bring—
A life with God Himself—To serve no more
An earthly sovereign, but the King of Kings—
Yet ere the Crown of Victory could be won
The Cleansing Fire of Pain must first be borne—
Long days of suffering, and nights of dread,
Each longer than the last, through weary months
Of patient helplessness he lingered on
Nor murmured, nor rebelled, until at length
The bugle sounded—and his rest was won.

Take up Thy Cross, and Follow Me.

IS it so hard to suffer? Yes, indeed!
For Christ Himself did sweat great drops of blood
In His sore agony, and thrice He prayed
The cup might pass, if it were possible,
That so His Father's Will might be fulfilled—
And was he not the bravest of the brave?
But He who suffered knows how hard it is,
And knows our weakness too, and gives us strength
To bear the burden He has laid on us
In token of His love to draw us near—
For is it not a very proof of love
That He should let us share His Cross with Him?
Strangers may share our *Joy*, but only to
Our dearest and tried friend we tell our *Grief*—
And say "Bear this with me, for we are one."

Most precious privilege of friendship this
Something to bear for one we dearly love!
So, sending pain, He treats us as His friends.

And He, our Love, is with us in our pain
Supporting us, and will not let us fall,
Though weary, faint, exhausted, yet we feel
Still "Underneath the Everlasting Arms";
And, as a tired child lays down his head
Upon his mother's breast, and gently sleeps,
So we may safely trust in Him,—and rest—
His strength made perfect in our feebleness.

Conversion.

HAT is this strange new fear within my heart,
The dawning Light I cannot choose but see,
Although I fear to look? and what this voice
I seem to hear, "Leave all and follow Me?"

Follow the Light! But whither will it lead?
How shall I know that it is not a snare,
A wrecker's light, the Devil's cunning scheme
To tempt me to destruction unaware?

It casts a doubting shadow on the truths
I learnt in childhood, and have always loved—
And yet they *must* be true, why should I doubt?
Good men have taught them, and their truth approved.

And what *is* Truth? Can any one be *sure*
Mid Creeds and Churches numberless to-day?
And yet methinks I hear that voice reply,
"*I only* am the Truth, the Life, the Way."

Yea, Lord, I know, I *do* believe in *Thee*,
And fain would love and serve Thee with my life,
O give me back past confidence and peace,
And silence all this controversial strife.

For surely Thou hast placed me where I am,
And given me this work to do for Thee,
The work for which I live,—the friends I love—
What means this voice—"Leave all, and follow Me."

Is it Thy voice, O Lord, that calleth me?
Then give me grace to follow and obey;
Speak Lord, thy servant heareth, only speak,
For I will trust in Thee although Thou slay.

Give me more Light, I do not fear it now,
But welcome it as one who finds relief
From years of blindness—but now blind no more,
Lord I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.

I see the truth at last—Thy Church is *One*,
No Branch or Sect, but undivided still
And indivisible—a living Voice
To speak Thy Words to men, and teach Thy Will.

And this Thy Church must be infallible,
For all the world a *sure* and *certain* Guide,
'Gainst whom the gates of Hell shall not prevail,
For Thou hast sworn to cherish Her, Thy Bride.

Thy Church is *One*—No other voice is Thine,
I thank Thee, Lord, at length the Light has come,
All doubt is over, and I know Her now
My loving Mother, and my own true Home.

Monstra Te Esse Matrem.

MARY, my Mother, listen to my prayer,
It is not for myself I come to plead,
But for a sister dearer than my life,
O show thyself a Mother in her need.

She is more worthy of thy love than I,
Yet she has never known thee, Mother dear,
Has never known thy love, nor sought thy prayers,
And in her troubles never felt thee near.

Thy Jesus gave her from the Cross to thee,
O claim her then, dear Mother, for thine own,
She is thy child, although she knows it not,
Leave her no longer motherless, alone.

O pray for her, as only thou canst pray,
Thy Son will grant whate'er thou ask of Him,
That she may know the Truth, and walk no more
In doubt and darkness amid shadows dim.

That He will give her of His boundless grace
The strength she needs, the courage to behold
And to embrace the one true holy Faith,
For which our Fathers died in days of old.

This land of ours was once thy Dowry called,
An Isle of Saints, a jewel in thy crown,
But cruel men have robbed her of her Faith,
And all thy Shrines and Altars broken down.

They taught thy children 'twas a grievous sin
To honour thee, the Mother of our Lord ;
Though He, Himself, it was who loved thee best,
And always was obedient to thy word.

And He, our Brother, gave us all to thee
To be thy children—'tis for His dear sake
We love and honour thee, whom He so loved,
And of thy love for Him a share partake.

O Mother, pray for this poor darkened land,
That she may be thy dowry once again ;
O show thyself a Mother to us all,
And plead for us—Thou canst not plead in vain.

"For never was it known," St. Bernard says,
"That any one in vain did seek thine aid,"
And Jesus loves to send His gifts through thee,
Then intercede for us sweet Mother Maid.

And pray for her whom I so fondly love,
That to His Church she may be reconciled,
And comfort find within thy tender arms,
O show thyself a Mother to thy child.

The Gift of Love.

COME closer, darling, lay your hand in mine, so,
And nestle here, your head upon my breast,
And tell me all your love, and pain, and longing,
Or tell me nothing, only lie and rest.

We need no words to understand each other,
Your every thought finds echo in my heart;
I love you so, that, be it joy or sorrow,
In all you feel I needs must bear my part.

Then whisper, darling, let me share your trouble,
Tell me what you will, of all you fear;
Are you hungering for a love withholden
You may not claim, although it seems so near?

Or do you fear to trust your own heart's prompting,
Lest Love should steal your heart from things above?
Nay, fear it not, 'tis God's best gift from Heaven,
Straight from Himself it comes, for God *is* Love.

It is because He made us in His likeness
We long to live in Love's bright atmosphere,
And while the Sun of Love all Heaven illumines,
We feel the faint reflection of it here.

E'en though our love be lavished and unheeded,
And seem to bring us only blissful pain ;
God's treasure surely never can be wasted,
But we shall find it ours in Heaven again.

Our earthly love is but a bud unfolding
Into the perfect flower of Love divine ;
That only blooms in its own native country,
Where the Sun's glorious rays on it may shine.

Through human love our Father leads us gently
To feel and understand His own great Love,
To teach us how He fain would have us love Him,
And His deep tenderness for us to prove.

Then dearest, fear no more Love's soft sweet calling,
It comes from God, and He will have it so ;
But ask Him now to bless and sanctify it,
That we, through Love, more near to Him may grow.

The Message of Death.

THE Doctors came to-day, and shook their heads,
And told with pitying eyes that I must die :
Why should they pity me ? Why look so sad
To know the captive from its cage may fly ?

The Lord hath need of me ! O can it be
That He should need me in His Home above ?
That I am soon to see Him face to face,
I, who am so unworthy of His Love ?

Yet He has always loved me—all my life
Has poured His blessings on me, given me more
Than I could dare to ask—His richest gifts
Has showered upon me from His boundless store.

Husband and children, happy home and friends,
And earthly joys far more than I can tell,
Yet more than all, and best of all His gifts—
He gives His Love—Himself—to me as well.

And shall I fear Him *now*, or doubt His Love,
And if He call me, shall I ask to stay ?
Shall I not rather listen for His voice,
And gladly, humbly, hasten to obey ?

Though I must part from him I dearly love,
And those who *seem* to need me I must leave,
I trust them confidently to His care,
Who will not suffer them for long to grieve.

He loves them more than wife or mother can,
And if He takes me from them, then I know
That He, Himself, the Comforter, will come,
And it is better for them that I go.

And we shall not be very far apart,
But still in one Communion as before,
And when they kneel at morn and eve to pray,
My prayers will join them on the other shore.

So thus before our Heavenly Father's Throne,
Our souls may meet, and in His Praise unite,
And we shall be together in our prayers,
Still one in Faith, and only lost to sight.

A little while, a few more years at most,
And they will join me in that happy Home
No more to part—To serve the Lord we love
Where sin is not, and death can never come.

Ode to Saint Joseph.

SWEET Saint, who dost in thy humility
So far above all Crownèd Monarchs stand
So near to Jesus—who the Lord of Lords
Didst lead, a helpless Infant, by the hand,
To thee thy God was subject—wondrous thought!
Yet humble still, the honour on thee laid
Too great for pride, but fills thy modest soul
With reverent love, half wistful, half afraid.

Chosen of God from all eternity,
And for thy sacred office set apart,
Thine only care was to fulfil thy trust,
No thought of self was in thy faithful heart.
How gladly didst thou labour to protect
Thy precious charge, thy spotless Virgin Wife,
And shield from every ill her Little One
Through all the tender years of infant life.

The bliss, once granted to Saint Anthony
For one ecstatic moment, always thine,
For thou couldst carry in thy loving arms
From day to day the Holy Child Divine:
What rapture this! What joy unspeakable!
To comfort and caress th' Incarnate Lord
Before Whose Throne the Cherubim do bow,
And holy Angels tremble at His Word.

O glorious pattern of Humility,
That rarest flower among the human race,
That like the veil of moss upon the rose,
Doth clothe the highest Saints with added grace.
To none but such a pure and simple soul,
Could such a height of glory have been given,
It was thy meek unconsciousness of self
That made thee worthy of the Courts of Heaven.

Get us the grace to lead a life like thine,
To tread the happy path thy steps have trod,
Happy in honest labour, well content,
Though we remain unknown to all but God;
That we may offer all our gifts to Him,
Not thinking much of this world's fleeting fame,
But striving that in thought, and word, and deed
We may be worthy of our Master's Name.

And when at last, although so feebly done,
And little worth, our short day's work is o'er,
O leave us not, but help us in that hour,
For we shall need thee more than e'er before;
Then pray that we, thy clients during life
May share the solemn beauty of thy death,
Like thee, may fall asleep in Mary's arms,
And yield to Jesus our last fluttering breath.

The Mission of Bow Common.

(A TRUE STORY.)

OW COMMON! Was it named in sport?
Was *ever* Common there?
Where now for trees are chimney pots,
And fog and smoke for air?

A good and zealous Priest one day
To this poor "Common" came,
And found a heathen settlement
That scarcely knew God's Name.

"In Christian England," thus he cried,
"'Twere hard such shame should be,
O let me teach this people, Lord,
To love and worship Thee;

"It is not much I have to give,
I am but Thy poor Priest,
But if Thou wilt make use of me,
I'll give *myself* at least."

The Master heard His servant's prayer,
And granted his request,
The work accepted at his hands,
And all his efforts blessed.

No church was there—a baker's shop
Was all he could afford,
In which to make a Resting Place
For his Incarnate Lord;

There day by day he offered up
The Holy Sacrifice
For those poor souls he longed to save
From ignorance and vice.

He struggled hard from morn to eve,
And laboured not in vain
To teach the sinner penitence,
And comfort those in pain.

And so by his unselfish life,
He proved the truths he taught,
That told of the Good Shepherd's Love,
And the lost sheep He sought.

The People learnt to love their Priest,
And he might go alone
Unharmed through court and alley where
Policemen were unknown;

And there, mid riot, fight, or fray,
Wherever he appeared,
The quarrel ceased, his gentle word
The only law they feared.

Now very soon that little room
Grew all too small a place
To hold the crowd of worshippers
Who sought the means of grace;

But God who saw their urgent need
And knew their poverty,
Had made provision of his own
To help them as you'll see;

Some time before, a clergyman,
(A convert by God's grace)
Had held a city living
In a large and wealthy place.

But, as the worshippers were few,
His church at length was sold,
And compensation given him
In heavy sums of gold.

This wealth was not his own, but God's,
And he resolved to raise
A noble church in some poor spot
In thanksgiving and praise.

What spot more needy could be found
Then poor forsaken Bow?
God led him there—A site was bought,
The walls began to grow.

The humble Priest this wondrous gift
Could hardly realize,
It seemed as though a miracle
Were wrought before his eyes.

Both Church and Schools were quickly built,
And hundreds daily came
To be baptized, and taught of God,
To praise His Holy Name.

And now the whole community
Is Catholic once more,
As in the ancient days of Faith
Their Fathers were before.

And still the good Priest labours there,
Happy mid toil and strife,
To feed the people that he loves
Upon the Bread of Life.

And if you wander down that way
The Church and Schools you'll see
And you may hear again this tale
As it was told to me.

Ave Maris Stella.

SEE how brightly the sun shines over the bay,
As the fishing boats line the quay,
They are all getting ready to sail away,
Far away to the Northern Sea;

For Winter is over, and Spring-time is come,
All Nature is waking from sleep,
And the poor Breton fisher must leave his home
To gather the spoils of the deep.

The goëlettes are ready, the lading is done,
And the Carnival week is past,
The fisher's farewell with its frolic and fun,
And the parting must come at last;

Now the merriment daily becomes less gay,
A laugh often ends in a sigh,
For, tho' struggle to hide it as best they may,
There's a tear in many an eye.

The wives and the mothers are thinking with pain
Of the perils they know must be,
And of those who will never return again,
O pray for them Star of the Sea.

At last all the lingering adieus have been said,
And the boats glide away from the quay,
And the fishermen sing as the sails are spread,
O shine on us Star of the Sea.

O'er the waves to the watchers is wafted the hymn
And they echo it fervently,
As the boats disappear in the distance dim,
Watch over them Star of the Sea.

But the women now back to their homes must go
And must work and must cease to weep,
For the Father above them, as well they know,
Will their dear ones in safety keep.

And at night when the moon and the stars are seen
Shining down on them bright and fair,
They will think of the Star of the Sea, their Queen
And will know that she hears their prayer.

Or at times when the tempest doth rage and roar,
And the waves roll in mountains high,
They will cry to the Star of the Sea once more
To illumine the leaden sky;

For they know she is watching and listening there
Though no other star can they see,
And the poor Breton fishers are safe in the care
Of their Patron, the Star of the Sea.

As in praying and working the year rolls by,
And October again comes round,
O how eagerly then will they scan the sky
For the sails of the homeward-bound;

And though there be some whom they look for in vain,
'Neath the deep cradled peacefully,
They know that ere long they will meet them again
In the land where is no more Sea.

So we pray that our Lady thro' life's troubled tide
Our refuge and haven may be,
And in our last voyage may still be our guide,
Stella Maris, bright Star of the Sea.

"Memorare."

THE boy had a task before him
That seemed beyond his power,
The questions were hard to answer
And the work must be done in an hour.

His pale face grew more anxious
With each precious moment spent,
As he thought of his mother's sorrow,
And of all that failure meant.

"If I only could remember!
Remember!"——he said again,
The word brought some suggestion
To the boy's poor tired brain.

Then a bright glance darted upwards—
What is it that has now
Chased away that look of trouble
From the pale and thoughtful brow?

Has he at last remembered
Some verse of Latin or Greek?
His lips seem to be moving
Though nobody hears him speak.

And now he writes more quickly,
As the answers seem to rise
Before his brain like magic,
And a light shines in his eyes;

The paper is rapidly covered,
He throws down his pen at last—
His task is just completed
Before the hour has passed.

And when the prize is given
His comrades cheer at his luck
And rejoice that he was not beaten,
They admire what they call his pluck.

But again the boy looks upward
With a happy grateful smile,
And a mist as of unshed tears
Seems to dim his eyes for awhile.

As he murmurs "Mother, I thank thee,
But I *knew* thou could'st not forget,
When I thought of the 'Memorare,'
For thou never hast failed me yet."

Satisfied.

OUR life on earth is full of disappointment,
Climb as we may upon the sunny side,
Even the happiest and most contented
Must know some dearest wish ungratified—
Try as we will to bury and forget it,
Weary with longing for some boon denied,
Our inmost heart will still be aching, aching
For this one yearning love unsatisfied.

Though we may hide it from the world around us
And never breathe it but to God in prayer,
And still enjoy the blessings that surround us,
And seem to others wholly free from care,
Rejoicing in the gifts that God has given,
And thanking Him for such a bounteous share,
Nor murmuring that ought has been withholden,
Still *underneath* we feel the void is there.

And so the happiest lot is still imperfect,
'Tis better for us that it should be so,
Our Father's wise provision for His children;
For this is not our home, as well we know—
'Tis but a camping ground upon our journey,
'Tis but a country we are passing thro',
And if its beauty should too close enthrall us
It might be hard for us when called to go.

But now we look to Heaven, our native country,
There, there alone, shall we find perfect bliss,
And nothing here on earth can quite content us,
For we were made for higher things than this—
God made us for Himself, in His own likeness,
And nothing less than God can e'er suffice
To fill the craving of our higher nature,
The hunger for a love that never dies.

No human love is great enough to fill it,
The finite cannot fill the Infinite!
And friends may change, or tire of us, and fail us,
Or may forget us when we're out of sight;
But there is One whose love can never weary,
Who cares so much that for our love He died,
And we shall see Him as He is, and know Him—
O. *then*, at last, we shall be *Satisfied.*

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